

Talking About Research

Use the following questions to enhance your school board's ability to use, understand, and interpret research as you make decisions about policy.

Find out more about the research:

- ✓ Who conducted the study?
- ✓ What question does the study answer?
- ✓ When was the study done? Is it timely?
- ✓ Are the subjects of the study comparable to your situation? Are the students similar? Ages, racial composition, gender, diversity?
- ✓ What are some of the key points of the study?
- ✓ How does this study compare with other studies on this issue?

Learn what others think about the research:

- ✓ What do you most appreciate about the studies and what does that mean to you?
- ✓ Why is this important to you?
- ✓ What is most concerning to you about the studies?
- ✓ What new insights or ideas have you gained?

Determine whether the research is relevant:

- ✓ Are there areas of agreement among members of the board?
- ✓ How do these studies resonate with the values in our community?
- ✓ How do these studies help us advance our strategic plan?
- ✓ Which points from this research are most relevant to our situation?

The REDD project is a two-year study drawing on the resources of the Department of Communication Arts of the University of Wisconsin - Madison and the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. Funding is provided by the William T. Grant Foundation.

<http://redd.commart.wisc.edu/>



**Research on Education,
REDD Deliberation, and Decision-making**

Talking about Research with the Community

In addition to carefully examining research as a school board, it is important to think about how you explain that research and your policy decisions to the community.

- *Consider the needs of your audience.* Internal stakeholders like teachers and administrators may be more accepting of research than the public because of their education and professional development. The following questions can help you better understand the needs of your audience:
 - ✓ What does my audience know about the issue?
 - ✓ How involved have people been in the issue?
 - ✓ Are there competing interests in the audience?
 - ✓ Have all interests been considered and acknowledged?
 - ✓ What examples or experience might help explain this research to a lay audience?
- *Avoid technical language.* Sometimes examples or experience can be used to help the audience understand what the research means.
- *Acknowledge different perspectives that audience members may bring to the meeting.*
- *Take time to carefully construct your presentation.*
 - ✓ Use an introduction to outline what you are going to present.
 - ✓ Limit your presentation to three main points.
 - ✓ Use simple graphs, pictures, and examples to explain complex concepts.If you have more information to provide, use a hand out.

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